

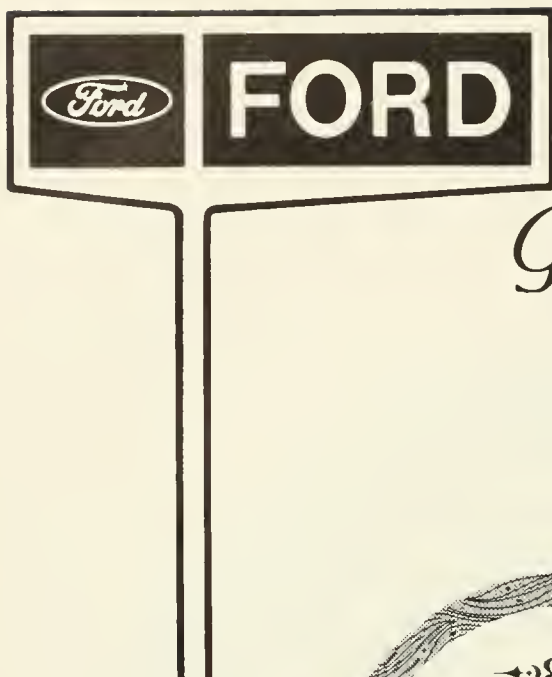
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Westville, Illinois.
1873-1973.



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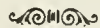
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Foreword

This Centennial History of Westville, Illinois was prepared under the sponsorship of the Westville Centennial Committee. The material was prepared, edited, and written by Simon Ronchetto and Ernest Brose. We wish to gratefully acknowledge all who have contributed in any way to make this book a reality. Without your wonderful cooperation in providing materials we could not have published this record of Westville's History.

Every effort has been made to make this history accurate and authentic, and to eliminate any errors or omissions. For those that may have occurred we say, "TO ERR IS HUMAN, TO FORGIVE DIVINE".



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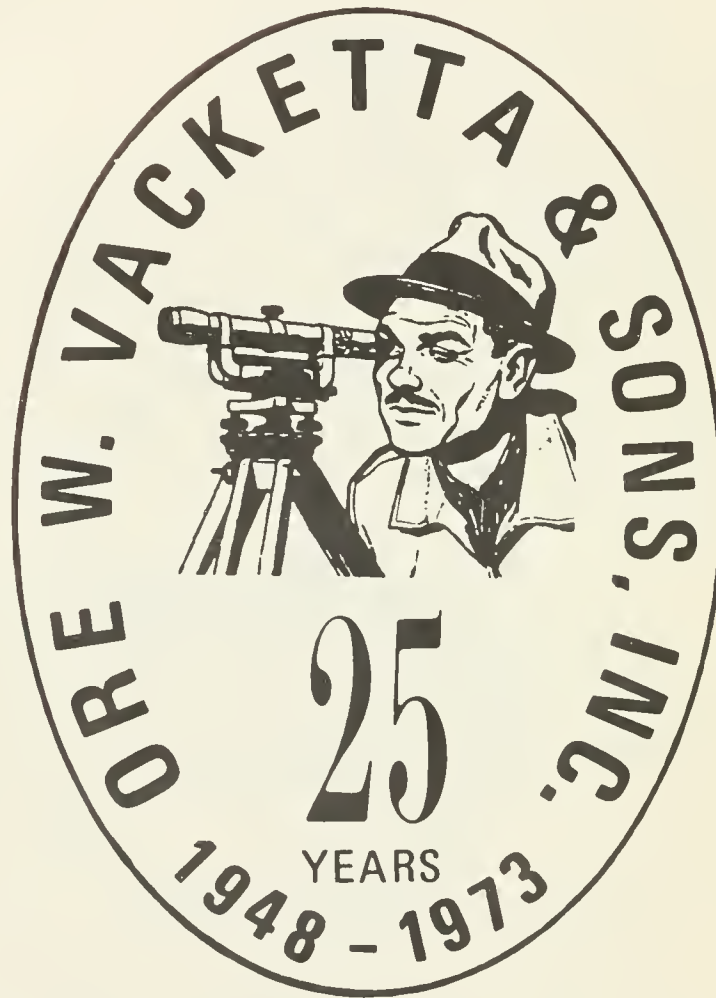
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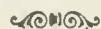
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Westville

The Melting Pot of Nations

It was about the turn of the Century that the New York Central Rail Road and the Lyons Yards were located just North of Westville. This truly made Westville a center of the Mining Industry, and brought other new industries to the area. This also brought many immigrants to Westville to work in the mines. These immigrants came from all parts of Europe bringing their customs and native tongues with them. This served to help Westville to become known as a "melting pot" of many nations and peoples into a truly "American Community". At one time Westville boasted of having 37 different Nationalities in its community. From this beginning 100 years ago, Westville has grown to its present size, and is justifiably proud of its heritage of the melting pot of nations, its contributions to the mining industry, and the home of the first night football game played in the United States. It is indeed understandable that the people of Westville have a feeling of pride for their part in making the Westville Community what it is today. Each resident, past and present, has contributed to the Heritage of Westville, and we sincerely hope that this record of its history will serve to record your part in its history as a lasting remembrance.





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How It All Began



Burial site in Georgetown Cemetery of Elizabeth A. Scott-West for whom Westville was named.

When the first white settlers came to this region in 1820, it was inhabited by the Kickapoo Indians who erected their teepees at a point where the stream of Grape Creek flows into the Vermilion River. This point was also the site of the Piankishaw Indian villages for the two centuries prior to the coming of the Kickapoos and the Pottawattomes. The white man came into this territory by following the buffalo trails.

One of the earliest white settlements in Vermilion County was Brooks Point east of Westville, where the first school stood. The first white child born here was James O'Neal in 1822. Brooks Point received its name from Benjamin Brooks, who was among the first white settlers in Georgetown Township.

In 1827 Moses Scott sold his 40 acres of land in Indiana near Rising Sun, loaded his family of several children, one of whom was Elizabeth, onto an oxcart with all their worldly possessions and travelled the several hundred miles to the Westville Area. Elizabeth was born on March 24, 1824. With the proceeds of

the sale of his 40 acres in Indiana, he purchased a tract of land in what is now the South West corner of Westville. Here he erected a log cabin on the land that was eventually the Big Four Depot. He also had a blacksmith shop at the same location.

Elizabeth eventually married David Spencer, and they settled in the Northwest part of Vermilion County. Mr. Spencer was called to serve on the Grand Jury in Danville; and one evening while in Danville, he was taken sick with spotted fever and died the next morning. Elizabeth was later married to William P. West.

In the meantime, her father had accumulated approximately 700 acres of land in the Westville area, and was considered one of the richest men in Vermilion County. Upon the death of Moses Scott, Elizabeth inherited a portion of this land in the Brooks Point area. Since a village was springing up on this land, Elizabeth added "Ville" to her married name of West, and from this came the prosperous mining Village of Westville.

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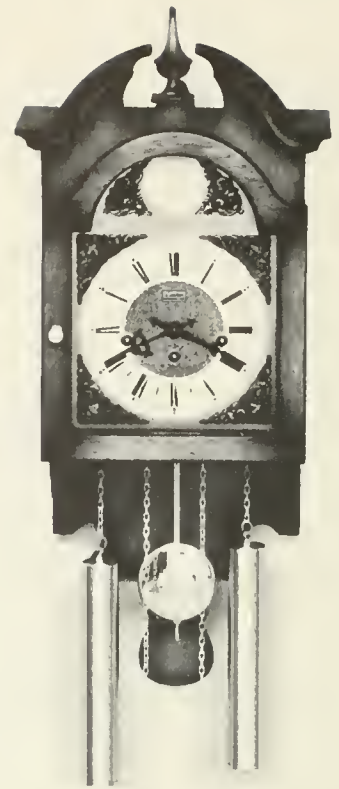
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First Official Record of Westville



One of the old landmarks in Westville.



Jenkins Ford Bridge crossing the Big Vermilion, built in 1893.

In May, 1873, Westville, a station on the Danville and Southwestern Railroad four miles from Georgetown was laid out by William P. and E. A. West on the Southeast corner of Section 6. At this time only two blocks were platted for record. They were located on what is now West Main Street, just West of the railroad tracks.

The first merchandise business actually started in 1872 when Parker Ellsworth opened a mercantile business West of the railroad. When they moved across to the East side of the railroad they sold out to Cook and Alexander and began a general mercantile trade. In succession the business was sold out to the Dukes & Doops, then to Boone and Jumps Bros. After just a short time they were succeeded by J. W. Lockett & Bros. who carried on a fair trade in general merchandise and buying country produce.

The first blacksmith business as such was established in 1872 by Jonathan Clayton, and upon his death was taken over by Mr. Holler, but after one year was sold out to J. F. Hutchinson. This was not to be confused with the blacksmith shop run by Mr. Moses Scott for the convenience of himself and a few of his neighbors only.

In 1877 H. C. Meyer opened a drug store and a short time later sold out to Dr. W. D. Steele who was engaged in the practice of medicine.



Southeast Corner of Square, 1896.

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*Interior of
Blacksmith Shop,
about 1900.*



*Interior view
of early Grocery
Store in Westville.*



Early 1900's



Westville Garage in early 1900's.

Andy Yerem Barber Shop

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Formal Organization of Westville

It was in July of 1896 that a petition consisting of 35 names was submitted to the Vermilion County Courthouse for an order of the Court requesting that Westville be organized as a Village. Some of these names are still well known here. Some of their childrens Great grandchildren still reside in Westville. William Boyd, John Roberts, John Possolt, John Kelly, J. H. Dukes, Leonard Stark, John L. Moses, to name but just a few who signed the petition.

The following September, a meeting was held of the first Village Board at Westville, which had a population of 303 at the time. Dr. Buford Taylor was the first Mayor, and J. B. Falcetti the first Clerk. The Board consisted of six members: J. T. O'Neal, William Ashby, R. L. Brooks, H. T. Parker, James Leichty, and John W. Evans. The meetings were held at Dr. Taylor's home for a time, and then at Ballard's Hall. In 1902 the Village Hall was built on North State Street. In 1897 Kellyville was annexed, telephone lines appeared in 1900, and electricity in 1901.

Until recently Westville was served by two railroads. The C & E I and the New York Central. (Big Four)



Grocery Store at turn of the century, located on West Street.



Westville Fire Department, around 1900.



Big 4 — NYC R.R. Station, located on W. Main in early 1900's.



C & E I Depot, Westville.



State Street in Westville in early 1900's.



Clover Huller used in early 1900's.

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WESTVILLE, ILLINOIS



Interurban crossing Vermilion River heading toward Westville.

The Interurban

It was in 1901 that the Danville Paxton & Northern Railroad was given the right to construct and operate an electric railway into Westville from Danville. It ran one car daily along the street adjacent to what is now Georgetown Road. They were originally allowed to operate the cars at a speed of 10 MPH. At the Memorial Bridge the track veered East to a bridge erected across the Vermilion River, ending at the Illinois Power Depot. Today's adults were yesterday's children who still remember at the time they crossed the bridge, they either hid their faces in their parents' laps or gazed downward in fascination at what must have appeared to be a hundred miles of space.



*Westville Grain Elevator near C & EI Depot.
Demolished 1937.*

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Interurban crossing trestle in Westville Area.



*Interurban
unloading baggage
in Westville area.*



Interurban from Westville to Danville before crossing Vermilion River.

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In 1903 the line was extended to Georgetown, and in 1906 it was extended to Ridgefarm. During this period of time, as the Village grew, the lines carried two or three cars or coaches, and operated every thirty minutes. This was in addition to hauling up to 12 cars of coal to the Illinois Power Co., and a lot of merchandise for the various business places. The Electric Line maintained a passenger and freight Depot on the North end of the present IGA parking lot. However, the bulk of all general merchandise was hauled in via the Big Four Railroad, or the C & E I Railroad, and the merchandise picked up at their depots by the merchants.

The Electric Line, or 'Interurban' as it came to be known, was a convenient way for the miners from Danville, Ridgefarm, and Georgetown to get nearer their places of work in the mines around the Westville area. Many of today's residents have a vivid recollection of riding the Interurban. The Interurban was abandoned in 1936.



First Ambulance in Vermilion Co., 1916.



Cole Hardware Store.



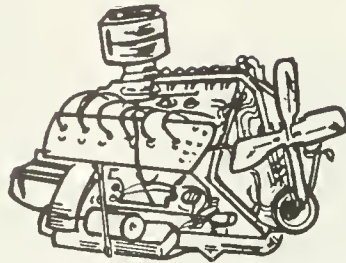
*The Thomas Building and Westville Baking Co.
located on N. State in early 1900's.*



Labor Day Parade, 1912.

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During much of this same time a Mr. Ellsworth ran a pasture for grazing cows on the East side of North State St., from about today's Moses St. to about Hickman St. This pasture was filled with 3 to 4 foot high stumps of walnut trees. It was a common practice for a family in Westville to have a cow for their daily supply of milk. They rented grazing privilege from Ellsworth for \$2.00 per month. Each morning and evening the people would either go to the pasture to milk their cow, or drive the cow home to milk. Some of today's adults in Westville remember the Interurban scaring the cows as they were being led to and from the pasture. In several instances the cows would be struck and killed by the Interurban. It was one of the daily chores of the children to have to get the cows for milking, or to go to the pasture to milk them and carry the milk home.

It was in the early 1900's that the Saloonkeepers in Westville got together to have a flying exhibition put on in an effort to attract people to Westville, and thus to their places of business. The airplane landed on



Curtiss Pusher Airplane which was in Westville in 1912.

the North side of the Railroad Tracks near where present day Scott St. is located. This of course was an open field at the time.

At the time of Prohibition there were 48 Saloons and 4 wholesale whiskey houses in Westville.

Black Gold of Westville

Since coal mining played such a big part in the growth of Westville, we go back to approximately the year 1860 when Mike Kelly came to the Westville area from Ireland via Pennsylvania. He went to work in the brick yards at the age of 21. He soon gave up this work to work a strip mine in the Hungry Hollow area. He hauled coal out by the wheelbarrow load, which was sold in Danville, and later to the Railroads. He eventually purchased the Hungry Hollow Mine for a reputed \$160.00. From this beginning, Mr. Kelly eventually opened and operated 5 mines in the Westville area as follows:

Kelly #1, located 1½ miles East of Kellyville. It opened in 1889 and closed in 1898.

Kelly #2, located 2 miles West of Kellyville. It opened in 1893 and closed in 1912.

Kelly #3, located at the Southwest edge of Westville. It opened in 1895 and closed in 1922.

Kelly #4, located at East Edge of Westville. It opened in 1902 and closed in 1924.

Kelly #5, located just Northeast of Westville. It opened in 1903 and closed in 1911.

The Kelly#5 mine closed prematurely because of water difficulties.



Bunsenville Mine.



Kelly #4 Mine.

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In 1905 Mr. Kelly sold mines #3, #4, and #5, to Mr. William B. McKinley, of U.S. Steel Corp. for a reputed \$3,000,000.00. Mr. McKinley later became a U.S. Senator.

During the early 1900's Mr. Kelly also owned and operated a general merchandise store at Kellyville, located where the present day Jacket Factory building is located. At this store miners and their families purchased their household needs on a charge basis, and these purchases were then deducted from the miners' earnings. Many families found themselves in debt to the store after their pay was applied to the bill.

In 1903 Mike Kelly purchased the Himrod Coal Co. Mine for \$260,000.00. This mine was located about 2½ miles East and ½ mile South of Westville. It opened in 1895 and closed in 1908. The Coal Co. built about 40 to 50 houses for the convenience of the miners and their families. There were also several grocery stores, saloons, and other business houses, including a jail. More than 500 people lived there at one time. The town of Himrod was incorporated in 1897, and on one 4th of July, it is said the flourishing town staged one of the largest celebrations ever in this section. In 1908 water broke into the mine eventually causing its closing, and the fall of Himrod. Many houses in the Himrod area were jacked up and moved to that part of Westville known as "Sardine Patch". In 1905 the first building South of the C & E I Railroad tracks on South State Street, was moved in from Himrod to the present site of the Stefani Tavern.



Kelly Coal Co. Store, early 1900's.



Himrod Coal Mine, 1906.



End of Old Kelly #4 when destroyed by fire in 1922.



Little Vermilion Mine.

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Other mines in operation before and after the turn of the century were:

Sharon mine, located between Georgetown and Ridgefarm, which closed in 1924.

Pawnee Mine, located between Westville and Grape Creek. It opened in 1885 and closed in 1907.

Deering Coal Co. operated 4 mines in this area:

Deering #1, located at South Westville Lane. It opened in 1893 and closed in 1907.

Deering #2, located South of Westville. It opened in 1902 and closed in 1913.

Deering #3, Located at Steelton. It opened in 1905 and closed in 1912.

Deering #4, located 4 miles Southwest of Westville. It opened in 1905 and closed in 1946.



One of the first buses used to haul miners to the mines.

It was the Deering #4 mine that was sold out to the Peabody Coal Co., and operated as Peabody Coal Mine until its closing. It closed in 1946 just a few months before the miners pension went into effect, and the employees were not eligible for the miners' pension. The Deering Coal Co. maintained an office at the C & E I Railroad tracks at the site of the present Cheker Oil Station.

The Vermilion Mine was sunk in 1902 by John T. Dickson in partnership with Mike Kelly. They later sold interests to John Vermilion, and thus it became known as Vermilion Mine. It closed in 1932.

Bunsenville Mine shaft was sunk in 1909 and opened in 1914. A small town was growing on the location called Bunsen after a man by that name. It closed in 1947.

Bluebird Mine, located at the foot of Lafferty Hill.

Dowiatt Mine, located 2 miles East of Westville.

Brookside Mine #1, located at Grape Creek.

Brookside Mine #2, located 2 miles East of Westville, presently the site of Westville Lake. It is said that the Westville Lake was lost to undermining of Brookside #2.

While the increase in coal production provided daily bread for the miner and his family, it also created



V-Day Coal Mine.

hardships: Violence and even bloodshed caused by poor working conditions, long hours, and low pay. This resulted in strike after strike, of which the big strike of 1896 was the most memorable. People had empty pantries, worn-out shoes, tattered and patched clothing, and no money with which to replace them. Ensuing years brought more strikes, all of them of long duration, and all a struggle. One strike in 1906 lasted 3 months, another 3 months in 1910, a 6 month struggle in 1912, and another in 1932. However, little by little, the miners' union, headed by John L. Lewis, was bringing about wage scale rises, improved working conditions, shorter working days, and child-labor restrictions.



Hegeler Zinc Works.

One of the leading figures to arise from the Westville Coal Fields was Tom Moses, who started out as one of the most disadvantaged. His accomplishments were most impressive. Born in 1869 in Pennsylvania, later moving to Indiana, his formal education consisted of only three terms of five months each. At the age of 11, Tom Moses worked as a "trapper" (one who opens and closes doors) in an Indiana Mine. At age 27 he was a full-time miner and after the day's work studied far into the night, being counselled by a high school teacher. These extra efforts paid off when he was made night boss of the Vermilion County Mine. In 1904 he was awarded a political job as Secretary of the State Mining Dept. In 1909 he became Superintendent of mines near Westville, connected with the U.S. Steel Corp. In 1927 Mr. Moses became president of J. C. Frick Coke Co., and U.S. Coke Co. coal feeders to the parent U.S. Steel Co.

In 1890 there were 64 mines in production in Vermilion County, and in both 1897 and 1899 Vermilion County ranked 1st in coal production in Illinois, with over 4000 mine employees.

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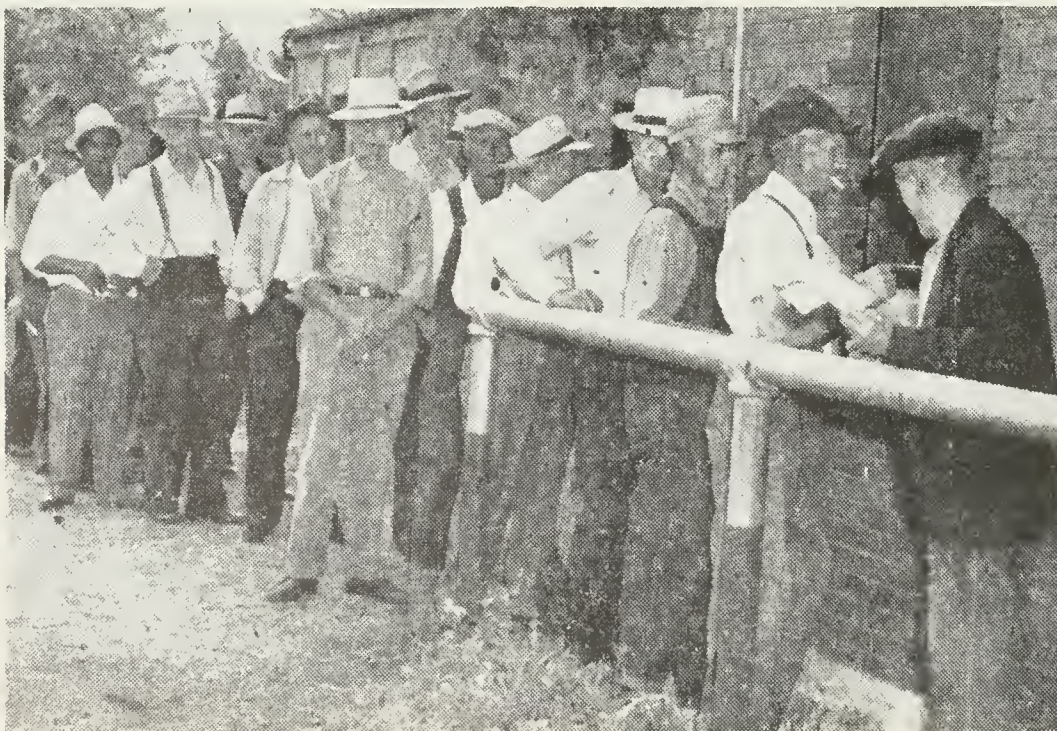
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Miners getting last pay check at Bunsenville Mine, late 1940's.

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*Westville Mines
in the early years.*



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N C U A

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The Westville Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized on June 17, 1871 by Rev. W. O. Smith at Brooks Point. The Christian Church known as Brooks Point Church was organized in April 1870 by Elder Martin.

First Congregational Church was organized in 1901 and the 1st building was dedicated in January of 1906. Rev. Robert Atkinson was ordained as minister. In 1940 they held a mortgage-burning ceremony for the debt of the 1st church building. A reorganization and reconsecration of the church was held in 1950. The present church building on Moses Ave. was dedicated September 23, 1962.

The Bethlehem Missionary Church was founded in November 1907 under the leadership of Rev. Allen White. This church was located on E. Kelly Ave. In 1909 the E. Church St. property was purchased, and two houses were joined together to form a place of worship, until 1918 when the present church was built.

The Church of Christ, located 1½ miles west of Westville was organized in 1955. The first phase of the building program was a basement, where the congregation worshiped for several years. With much work from members and friends the church was finished and dedicated on April 3, 1965.

The white Frame Church on West Main St. was built in the early 1870's as a Presbyterian Denomination Church. Later it was used as a Church of Christ, and still later as an independent Catholic Church at which time it was known as the Holy Cross Church.



Congregational Church built in 1905.



Trinity United Church of Christ as it appears today.



Present day First Church of Christ.



Holy Cross Church built in mid-1870's.



Bethlehem Baptist Church, present day.

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Westville Schools

Before the turn of the century at Brooks Point, East of Westville, the first school was built, as Westville began to grow. A four room frame building was erected at the site of the old Central School, and a two room building where Edison School was later built. In 1909 the new eight room Central School was completed, the old four room frame building was sold to Ss. Peter & Paul's, and moved to their property west of the Big 4 tracks, where it was used as a school.



Judith Giacoma School



McMillan School



St. Mary's School



Westville High School



Junior High School

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Group picture of Edison School Students — early 1900's.



Edison School — built in 1913.



2nd Central School, built in early 1900's.

A High School District was founded in 1910 after much opposition, and in 1911 High School was started in two of the rooms of Central School. In 1913 Edison School of eight rooms was built, and four rooms were added to Central School. The last class to graduate from Central High School was in 1918. The present High School was completed in 1917-1918, and at that time the school system consisted of Edison School, Central School, High School, two rooms at Derring Coal Co. office building, (presently Cheker Oil Co.), one room at West Side Tavern Building, (presently Silver Dollar Tap), and Washington School on E. Kelly Ave. St. Mary's School was also operating, but was closed in 1933 and reopened in 1939. In 1929 an addition was added to the High School, and in 1956 Jr. High School was built on Moses Ave. In 1967 Judith Giacoma School was completed on Walnut St. In the 1920's McMillan School was built, and during the 1930's a new brick McMillan School was built with W.P.A. funds and labor, and added to the Westville School System.

In 1920, Miss Hallie Magill opened the first Library and Kindergarten serving the church and Community until 1942.



Original Central School.



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SOUTH STATE STREET

WESTVILLE, ILLINOIS



*South view of old St. Mary's School with North State St. on the left.
Members of Redman Lodge are in the foreground.*



Original Westville High School — built in 1917.

We Thank You - As



Peter J. Giacomia
President

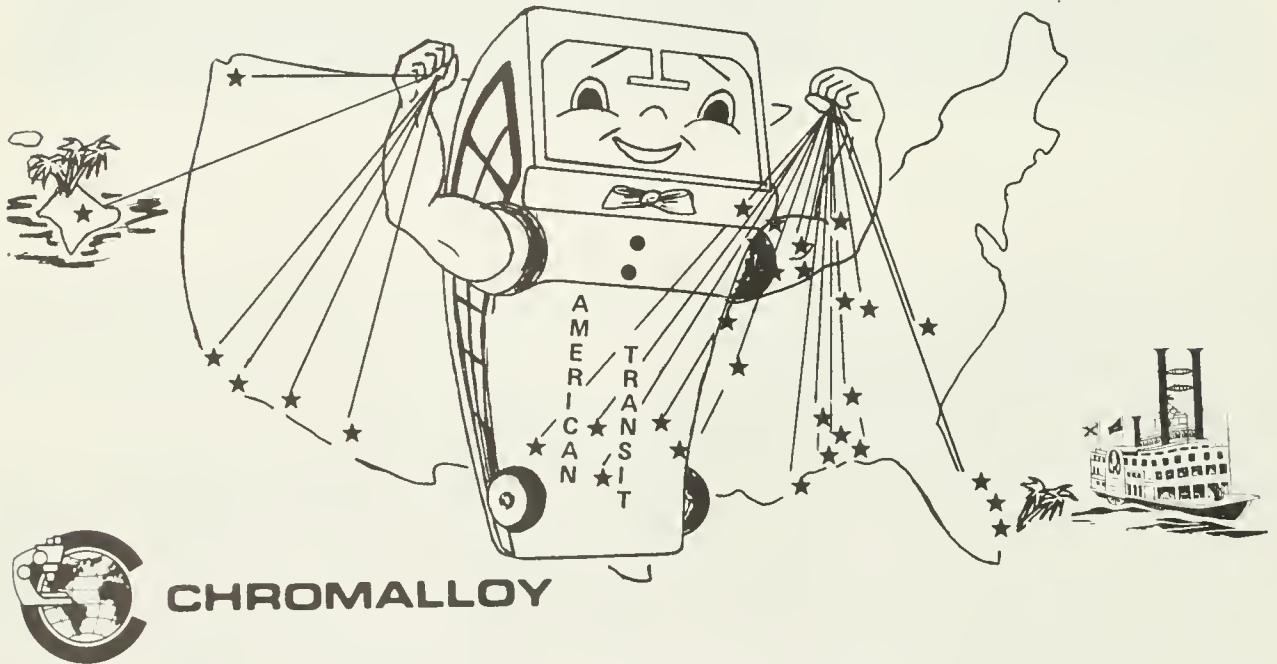


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It All Began In Westville



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ORE VACKETTA — Westville, Ill.

TOM YUHAS — St. Louis, Mo.

It All Began In Westville

This year marks the 37th anniversary of the founding of Bee Line Transit Corporation, the first stepping stone to what has become the American Transit Corp., a transportation management and holding company involved in city transit, sightseeing, suburban, school and campus bus service and car rental and leasing systems. American Transit merged with Chromalloy American Corporation, a highly successful and diversified corporation in 1965.

In April, 1936, the Illinois Terminal System was granted authority to abandon electric car service operating between Danville, Westville and Georgetown. Dominick "Nick" Giacomini, the operator of a local coal hauling truck, who had just the previous year negotiated a contract with the Westville School District to operate one school bus between Union Corner, Grape Creek and Westville High School obtained the financial backing of John Perona, Frank Vernick, Bert Boswell and Frank Remy to operate a bus system to replace ITS service. With the legal assistance of the late Tom Stifler, a Danville attorney, Bee Line was granted authority by the Illinois Commerce Commission and began its operation the day following Illinois Terminal's termination of service. Nick then turned to a number of his boyhood friends. John Ghibaudy, his brother Pete, Joe Mackovic and Henry DeTournay, all coal miners, along with Nick, and later his younger brother, Victor, became the bus operators. Clint "Pop" Finley, now living in Central Park, was engaged as Chief Mechanic and Bee Line began its operation from the Bee Line garage at the corner of State and South Street. Charles "Chuck" Brooks, a retired Westville banker agreed to spend at least two weeks to help "set up the books". Chuck stayed on the job until his death some 20 years later.

The first three buses, two 21 passenger and one 25 passenger were Modified Wayne School Bus type bodies mounted on one and one-half ton Chevrolet truck chassis. Fares were: between Danville and Kellyville—10 cents; Westville—12 cents; Clingan Lane—15 cents and Georgetown—20 cents, local city fare was 5 cents. Round trip tickets were sold at a 5 cents discount and commuter tickets of 12 rides were sold at a 20 percent discount.

People of the area responded to the new, low cost service and Bee Line was on its way; that is, until two months later when the new road construction began, first between Danville and Lyons; then Lyons and Kellyville; then south Westville and Georgetown. This road improvement almost spelled the doom of the young bus line. Bee Line then leased the abandoned ITS electric car right of way and once the railroad ties were removed, this became the speedy way to travel to Danville. The disaster was the countless old discarded railroad spikes, rusted to needle sharpness that were brought to the surface by the required constant road grading and thumping of the buses. Untold number of spikes pierced the tires, ruining at least three to four tires per bus per day. The exclusive right of way, only wide enough for a bus, required gatemen at both Lyons and Central Park to keep motorists from using the road and blocking the buses and the cinder roadway required constant watering in an endeavor to control the dust. Even at that, the black dust was so thick that bus operators finished their nine to eleven hour shift looking blacker than coal miners after their days work. The added cost of tires and other necessary expenses soon depleted Bee Line's capital funds. With the financial help of friendly bankers and a few friends who had faith in the system, Bee Line weathered the storm and the new highways became an asset to the system.

It was not long before George Vacketta became associated with the Bee Line and as the bus fleet grew additional space was needed, so bus quarters were moved to the new addition of George Vacketta & Son on South State Street. Eventually, the need for additional space necessitated the purchase of a garage and station on South Hazel Street in Danville. In the 1960's a new terminal garage was built on Cleveland Street and though Bee Line no longer provides bus service between Danville, Westville and Georgetown, its school buses serve the school children of Westville, Danville and Hillary from this modern facility.

From this humble beginning in Westville, with its trials and tribulations, the knowledge learned in operating the Bee Line has enabled its founder and associates to expand their transportation systems to becoming one of the leading and most progressive transit operating and management firms in the United States with over 2,700 employees and a payroll exceeding eighteen million dollars annually.

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*Team that played
first night football game.*

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Middle Row— C. Lucas, Morris, Vilk, Urban, O. Simpson, Caccia, Mensavage, Reano, Godelausky, Yocius.
Front Row— Stine, Miller, J. Lutchka, Sharkey, T. Lutchka (Capt.), Mazeikas, Dugas, Jonelis, P. Lucas, Alpy Galinausky and Kvetinskas, Mgrs.

During the 1920's Westville High School was noted for its outstanding football teams. They played games on Friday and Saturday afternoons nearly always before capacity crowds.

However, by the late 20's, the failing coal business began to affect the attendance at the games. Since the miners were at work and could not attend during the day, Russell L. Guin, the High School principal, conceived the idea of having a game played at night, so that all those who wanted to could have the opportunity of attending the game. He also reasoned that it would draw people from neighboring towns, and thus further boost the attendance.

In August, men from Haussey Bros. and two of the local high school boys, (Jess Moyer and Frank Jonelis) went out into the woods to cut sapling trees and brought them to the football field. Each of these trees served to hold two lights and reflectors. A contact was made with Milford High School, and they agreed to be Westville's opponent in this experiment. September 28 was selected as the night for the game to be played.

When the night of the big game came, the lights were turned on early, and Boy Scouts, Guards, extra Policemen, and every available police and Fire Member were on hand to handle the crowd expected to attend. Hours before the game, cars began to roll in and park. By the starting time of the game over 4000 cheering fans filled every available seat in the bleachers, as well as all available standing space around the football field. The ball used in the game was painted

with white lacquer to enhance its visibility under the lights. This made it quite slippery early in the game and caused several fumbles. This same ball is now in the trophy case at Westville High School.

Westville won the game over Milford by a 26 to 6 score. Thus it was that the first night football game in the United States was played at Westville on September 28, 1928.

The Westville team that year compiled a record of 10 victories and 0 defeats. They scored 242 points against their opponents 20 during this undefeated season. The team was coached by Clayton M. Miller, who coached at Westville for 10 years, compiling a record of 105 victories against 28 losses, and this included 3 undefeated seasons.

Members of the Westville team that played the first night football game in the United States were: William Dugas, Zano Gailus, Frank Jonelis, Edward Mensavage, Paul Stine, Tony Lutchka, Al Miller, John Sharkey, Pete Lucas, Joe Maziekas, Joe Lutchka, Merlin Kelly, Alex Norbut, Russell Notar, John Benedict, R. Simpson, Charles Benedict, Joe Frankino, Peter Kriviskey, Frank Rautkis, Frank Kedas, Charles Lucas, Tory Morris, Jess Vilkanskas, Charles Urban, Omer Simpson, Joe Caccia, John Reano, Charles Godeluaksy, Steve Yocius, and Alphonse Galan.

Coach Clayton Miller, Principal Russell Guin, and all members of the team will long be remembered by their fans. Anytime great moments in sports are discussed you can almost count on the first night game coming up. It will always be remembered that it was played in Westville.

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U.S. Post Office



State Street looking north.

The Post Office has been located all over town. The first Post Office was established in 1876, and S. W. Dukes was appointed the first Postmaster. He was later succeeded by J. W. Lockett. By 1889 the Post Office was in an old home where the Carp Store now stands on W. Main St. At that time Squire Cobb was Postmaster. It was then moved across the street to the John Dukes Building, and from there to a small building about the size of a watchmans shanty close by the Big Four tracks. The shanty was so small that people had to get their mail from the outside window. Squire Cobb was a small man and there was only room for him and his stove inside. Squire Cobb wore a beard reminiscent of Abe Lincoln. Mr. John Ashby was appointed Postmaster, and he moved the office across the Big Four tracks to a woodworking shop he ran as a carpenter. This building stood near where Ss. Peter & Paul Church is now located. From there it was moved to a residence at the corner of W. Main and Scott Sts. It was moved to a building just across the street from its present location, and from there to the Dr. B. Taylor Building on the corner of W. Main and West Sts. It was then moved to the Bank Building on State Street, and from there to its present location on W. Main Street.

Bank

The first bank in Westville was the 1st National Bank founded in 1904. The first president was George Robertson. By this time Westville was a thriving community, and was much in need of banking facilities. Many mines were in operation, and a "Bank" established the community as a full fledged Village.



State Street looking south in early 1900's.



Landmark where 1st National Bank now stands.

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It was from an idea in the mind of Nellie Taylor Raub that resulted in the Library we now enjoy in Westville. It was under her sponsorship that Tri Lambda Sorority was organized in 1937. The primary purpose of this organization was to provide a Library to the community. It all started with a group of donated books which were put in circulation. This organization held rummage sales, bake sales, dances, tag days, and other fund raising projects to raise money to establish the Library.

Donations of books from individuals and neighboring libraries continued to accumulate, and as the collection grew space was obtained in the Post Office building, which was lighted by an Aladdin Lamp, and was carried from place to place for the use of patrons. Members of the Sorority gave volunteer service of two hours per month to serve in the Library.

A village tax was voted in April 1939, and the first Library Board was appointed. Members of this first board were: Frank Dugas, Paul Sommers, Miss Opal Howard, Miss Ann Columbus, Miss Anne Chromis, and Miss Helen Redulis. The Aladdin lamp was sold, and local merchants agreed to pay the electric light bill. In 1942 a building on the present site of the Library was offered for sale and purchased by the Library Board. With the aid of various Sorority projects the cost of the building was cleared by 1947. The building was in poor condition and it became a goal of prime importance to build a new building. By May 1949 enough funds were on hand to start construction of the present building.

It is indeed a feat of no small proportions that the dedicated people of the Sorority and of the Library Board, that Westville has such a fine Library to serve the community. There will ever be new goals for the Library and behind them a community spirit to bring them to reality.

Westville Library



Westville Public Library.



Interior view of library.

Westville Water System

Our water system began in 1926, at which time water revenue bonds were issued in the amount of \$170,000.00 at 5% interest, to be paid in 18 years. However, during the 1930's various financial difficulties arose that forced the system into receivership, which lasted until the early 1950's. On October 1, 1950, the unpaid principal of \$170,000.00 and accumulated interest of \$123,250.00 amounted to a total of \$293,250.00.

On October 1, 1950 4% refunding water revenue bonds were issued in the amount of \$192,000.00, payable from then to October 1, 1979. A Board of Water

Commissioners, consisting of 4 members, and the existing Village President, was formed. The new Board held their first meeting on March 20, 1951. Ordinances containing very strict regulations were adopted, and have since been followed by the Board. Since 1950 when the Water System was reorganized, at which time there were approximately 800 customers, it has grown to present day with over 1700 users.

Although the final bonds will not be due until 1979, the Westville Water System has enough money held in escrow to fully refund the revenue bonds. The commission is also mindful that adequate funds must be held aside for improvements and necessary repairs to a water system that is over 45 years old. They have funds set aside for this purpose also.

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During the early 1950's when coal mining in Westville reached a new low and ceased to be a source of employment for Westville residents, Natural Gas entered the picture for heating and cooking. There was considerable controversy over the best method of supplying this service to the Village. Some held the opinion that an outside Utility Company could best serve the needs, but it was finally decided by the Village Board that the Village should handle this as a Community Utility.

On February 1, 1955 ordinance # 1060 was drawn to provide for the issuance of Gas Utility Refunding Revenue Bonds in the principal amount of \$480,000.00, at 5% interest to mature between May 1961 and May 1989. A Board of Commissioners, consisting of 4 members, and the existing Village President was formed. Ordinances containing strict regulations were drawn to govern the operation of the Gas Company.

Finally, on February 1, 1958, Natural Gas was furnished to customers in Westville. At that time there were approximately 725 customers, which represented almost 98% of the resident households. Today there are over 1500 customers in the Westville Area using Natural Gas furnished by the Gas Utility.

Even though the last Revenue Bonds are not due until 1989, the Gas Commission has enough money held in escrow to fully refund the Gas System. It should be further noted that since the inception of the Westville Gas Company, and in spite of numerous price increases from the suppliers, and mounting operating costs, the Gas Commission has never increased its prices to the Customers. As a result, gas users in the Westville Area are enjoying the lowest gas rates in a wide area of the nation.

It is through the diligence and great efforts of the Water and Gas Commissions that the residents of Westville have a good income for the various operations of their Village. The Commission members are to be commended for their unceasing efforts.

Westville Gas Company



Old City Hall built in early 1900's. Demolished in the 60's.



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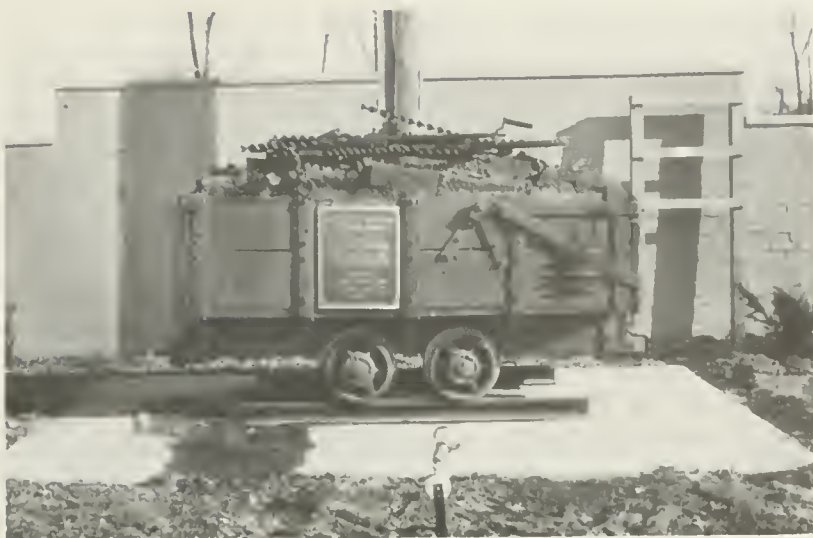
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Westville, Illinois



Miners Memorial — Westville Park.

Village Park

The Westville Village Park was opened during the early 1920's through the combined efforts of the Reverend Hershey of the Congregational Church, Lawrence Gaughran, Thomas Moses, and the many business people and individuals who donated money for the purchase of the land.

During the early thirties and the Depression years it was known as the Village or Community Vegetable Gardens. Individuals helped plant and maintain vegetables in the park for a share in the Crops.

It has since served the Community as a Park and recreation area, and it is much in use by all members of the Community. Many individuals, Businesses, and Organizations have contributed to make the Park what it is today. It is a truly Community Park.



WESTVILLE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL (1944)
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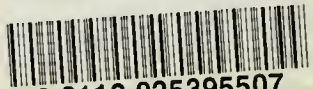




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